WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A server processing card, comprising:

a printed circuit board;

a central processing unit coupled with the printed circuit board;

memory integrated circuits coupled with the printed circuit board;

network interface integrated circuitry coupled with the printed circuit board; and

a master control module coupled with the central processing unit, the master control module being operable to monitor a master signal input in order to detect the presence of a master control signal being communicated to the server processing card; and

wherein the master control module remains idle if the master control signal is not detected.

2.   The server processing card of Claim 1, wherein the master control module becomes active if the master control signal is detected.

3.   The server processing card of Claim 2, wherein the active master control module performs hardware master responsibilities with regard to a plurality of computing devices coupled with the server processing card within a server chassis.

4.   The server processing card of Claim 3, wherein the active master control module monitors health information regarding hardware components coupled with the server processing card within the server chassis, the

5   hardware components including the plurality of computing devices.

5.   The server processing card of Claim 4, wherein the health information regarding the hardware components

10   is selected from the group consisting of operating temperature, operating voltages, operating fan speed, and operating disk drive health and configuration.

6.   The server processing card of Claim 3, wherein

15   the active master control module monitors configuration information regarding hardware components coupled with the server processing card, the hardware components including the plurality of computing devices.

20   7.   The server processing card of Claim 6, wherein the configuration information is selected from the group consisting of size of a disk drive, speed of a processor, unique identification numbers associated with the hardware components, memory capacity of memory integrated

25   circuits and operating capacity of power supplies.

8.   The server processing card of Claim 3, wherein the active master control module monitors information regarding hardware components coupled with the server

30   chassis the information being selected from the group consisting of health information and configuration information.

9. The server processing card of Claim 8, wherein the hardware components are selected from the group consisting of power supplies, disk drives, memory

5   integrated circuits, and cooling fans.

10. The server processing card of Claim 3, wherein the active master control module includes the ability to reboot at least one of the computing devices.

10

11. The server processing card of Claim 3, wherein the active master control module includes the ability to cause at least one of the computing devices to boot up from an operating system resident upon a remote component

15   of a local area network.

12. The server processing card of Claim 3, wherein the network interface integrated circuitry is coupled with a local area network, and the active master control

20   module is configured to report health and configuration data regarding at least one of the computing devices to a remote component of the local area network.

13. The server processing card of Claim 2, further

25   comprising a communication coupling configured to receive a control bus and wherein the active master control module is operable to control hardware components coupled with the server processing card within a server chassis using the control bus.
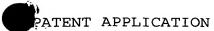
AS

14. A server chassis, comprising:

a plurality of server processing cards each having a respective master control module;

5   a midplane forming a communication coupling for communication among the plurality of server processing cards; and

wherein at least one of the plurality of server processing cards performs hardware master

10   responsibilities with regard to at least a subset of the server processing cards.

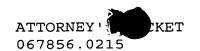15. A method for monitoring a plurality of server processing cards of a server chassis, comprising:

selecting at least one hardware master from among a plurality of server processing cards,

transmitting a hardware master control signal to the hardware master;

activating a master control module coupled with the hardware master; and

monitoring operating information regarding at least a subset of the plurality of server processing cards, from the hardware master.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein the information is selected from the group consisting of health information and configuration information regarding the operation of the subset of the plurality of server processing cards.

17. The method of Claim 15, further comprising at least partially controlling the operation of the subset of the plurality of server processing cards, from the hardware master.

18. The method of Claim 15, further comprising transmitting, from the hardware master, a command to at least one of the subset of the plurality of server processing cards, the command being operable to cause the at least one of the subset to reboot.

19. The method of Claim 15, further comprising transmitting, from the hardware master, a command to at least one of the subset of the plurality of server processing cards, the command being operable to cause the at least one of the subset to reboot from an operating system resident upon a remote module of a local area network coupled with the plurality of server processing cards.

20. A computer readable medium encoded with logic operable to

select at least one hardware master from among a plurality of server processing cards coupled with a
5   server chassis;

transmit a hardware master control signal to the hardware master;

activate a master control module coupled with the hardware master; and
10   monitor operating information regarding at least a subset of the plurality of server processing cards, from the hardware master.
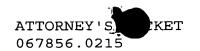
21. The computer readable medium of Claim 20,
15   wherein the logic is further operable to at least partially control the operation of the subset of the plurality of server processing cards, from the hardware master.

20   22. The computer readable medium of Claim 20, wherein the logic is further operable to transmit, from the hardware master, a command to at least one of the subset of the plurality of server processing cards, the command being operable to cause the at least one of the
25   subset to reboot.

23. The computer readable medium of Claim 20, wherein the logic is further operable to transmit, from the hardware master, a command to at least one of the
30   subset of the plurality of server processing cards, the command being operable to cause the at least one of the subset to reboot from an operating system resident upon a

A5   remote module of a local area network coupled with the plurality of server processing cards.

24. A system, comprising:

means for selecting at least one hardware master from among a plurality of server processing cards coupled with a server chassis;

5   means for transmitting a hardware master control signal to the hardware master;

means for activating a master control module coupled with the hardware master; and

means for monitoring operating information regarding
10   at least a subset of the plurality of server processing cards, from the hardware master.

25. The system of Claim 24, further comprising means for at least partially monitoring the operation of
15   the subset of the plurality of server processing cards, from the hardware master.

26. The method of Claim 24, further comprising means for transmitting, from the hardware master, a
20   command to at least one of the subset of the plurality of server processing cards, the command being operable to cause the at least one of the subset to reboot.

27. The system of Claim 24, further comprising
25   means for transmitting, from the hardware master, a command to at least one of the subset of the plurality of server processing cards, the command being operable to cause the at least one of the subset to reboot from an operating system resident upon a remote module of a local
30   area network coupled with the plurality of server processing cards.